



**Community Action Board
Southwest Center for Community Health Promotion**

*Mel and Enid Zuckerman
Arizona College of Public Health
CDC Arizona Prevention Research Center
1145 N. Campbell Avenue
P.O. Box 210228
Tucson, AZ 85721-0228
Phone: (520)318-7270*

ARIZONA
PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER
SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR
COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION

Members of the US-Mexico Border Health Commission:

We, members of the Community Action Board of the Southwest Center for Community Health Promotion, are writing to express our profound disappointment in your failure to take a position regarding Arizona's Proposition 200 in the recent U.S. elections. We are perplexed and disturbed that a body created specifically to address policy issues along our border has failed to meet its obligations. We are concerned that the Commission failed to heed the warnings of its Arizona members.

Proposition 200, which has now passed, will have a chilling effect on people's willingness to utilize much-needed health services, regardless of what happens in the courts in the future. This situation is unacceptable to us as health professionals and concerned residents of the border region. This new and ugly law, if it stands, will make health services providers unwilling and unpaid "employees" of the US Immigration and Naturalization Service and will interfere with their work. This, too, is unacceptable.

Although Proposition 200 was state-based, it is a threat to the entire US-Mexico border. It grew out of Proposition 187 in California, and it will lead to other, similar propositions in many other states. Indeed, that movement is already in full swing. We quote from an Associated Press report on November 11, 2004:

"A newly approved measure in Arizona aimed at keeping illegal immigrants from voting and obtaining some government services is encouraging groups nationwide that similar proposals could succeed in their states. Proposition 200 has motivated groups in Georgia, Idaho and Utah to consider drafting similar proposals. California and Colorado are already working to get immigration measures on the ballot in 2006. . . .

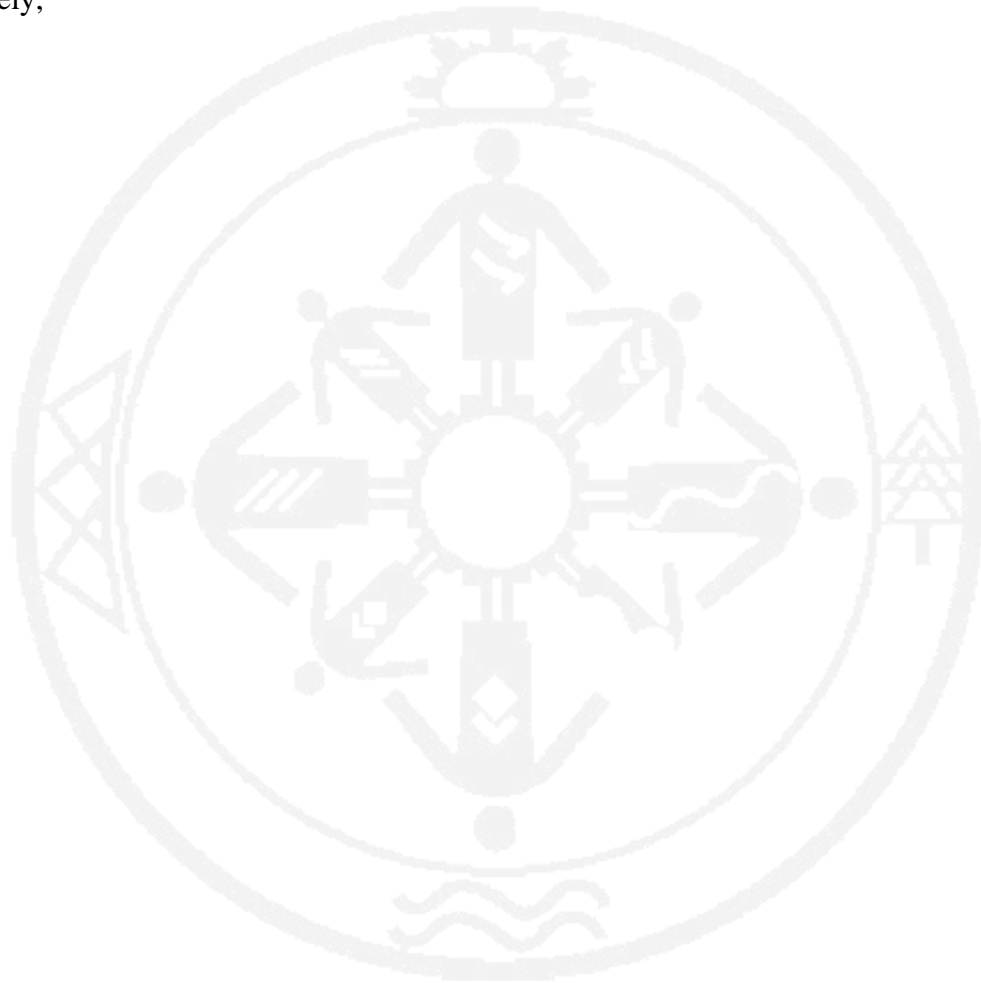
Ken Thomson, the executive director of Utahans for Immigration Reform, said he is concerned illegal immigrants who can no longer get services in Arizona will head elsewhere. 'Every state is going to be affected and that is going to drive voter interest,' he said."

The US-Mexico Border Health Commission was originally conceived as a much-needed voice, speaking to our Congress and nation on policy issues affecting the border region. While the Commission sponsors several outstanding health programs, this was never its mission. Its mission has always been policy. And yet, to our knowledge the Commission has never yet taken a policy stand on anything.

We commend Mexico's Ministry of Foreign Relations for taking such a stand on Proposition 200, publicly, at the federal level. And we commend Sonora's Foro de la Conferencia de Legisladores for taking a stand on Proposition 200 at the state level. As for the Commission, please remember that *not* taking action *is* action nonetheless.

If the US-Mexico Border Health Commission expects to retain the support of its constituents, it must show us that it acts in our interest on the broad level of border health policy. In the case of Proposition 200, you have let us down very badly by your shortsightedness and lack of vision.

Sincerely,



PROMOTING THE HEALTH OF THE
MULTIETHNIC COMMUNITIES OF THE
ARIZONA-SONORA, MEXICO BORDER
[HTTP://SWCCHP.PUBLICHEALTH.ARIZONA.EDU](http://swcchp.publichealth.arizona.edu)